Fleet Activities, Yokosuka, Japan

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Giant Voice gets upgrade, improves coverage, flexibility

By Joe Schmitt, CFAY Public Affairs

Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka is scheduled to finish upgrades to its 'Giant Voice' mass notification system Sept. 30. The project has been developed over the last few years and will bring better coverage and safety to service members and the CFAY community in the area.

"What people call 'the giant voice' is actually our mass notification system," said Tara Houlden, CFAY deputy chief information officer. "Just like you would see out in town to warn you about severe weather or heavy rain fall on base, we use them to tell people about an earthquake or tsunami, a steam leak, to reroute traffic if we have safety concerns. It is used to alert people to situations that could be hazardous to their health or safety."

CFAY is increasing the number of large speakers on the main base and at CFAY's Ikego Housing Detachment. These speakers are positioned near the industrial or fleet side of the base to alert commands and ships in the area to possible concerns. The upgrade will bring the total number of speakers installed to eight on the main base and four located in Ikego.

"We already had in place the system to alert our assets on the water front," said Houlden. "We wanted to increase our coverage to also include housing areas. What this allows for us to do is use the system to get the information out to more people in a wider area. You'll be able to hear it in the commissary, you'll be able to hear it in the exchange, you'll be able to hear it at the schools."

The hardware and software that operate the speakers is also being upgraded. The new components will enable the operator to send a message to all the speakers, some speakers in a selected area, or even just one speaker by itself. This will allow messages to be regionalized to the specific area. A message about a fire could be sent out to speakers in that area or a message about Ikego Housing Detachment could be sent to just those speakers.

"We are also working to make our announcements more congruent with the notification system out on town," said Houlden. "We have a large population of host-country nationals who work on base. We want them to have access to the same information. Almost all of the announcements will be bilingual, English and Japanese. The tones and the information will also be similar, that helps people who live off base when they go home. They will be more familiar with what they are hearing

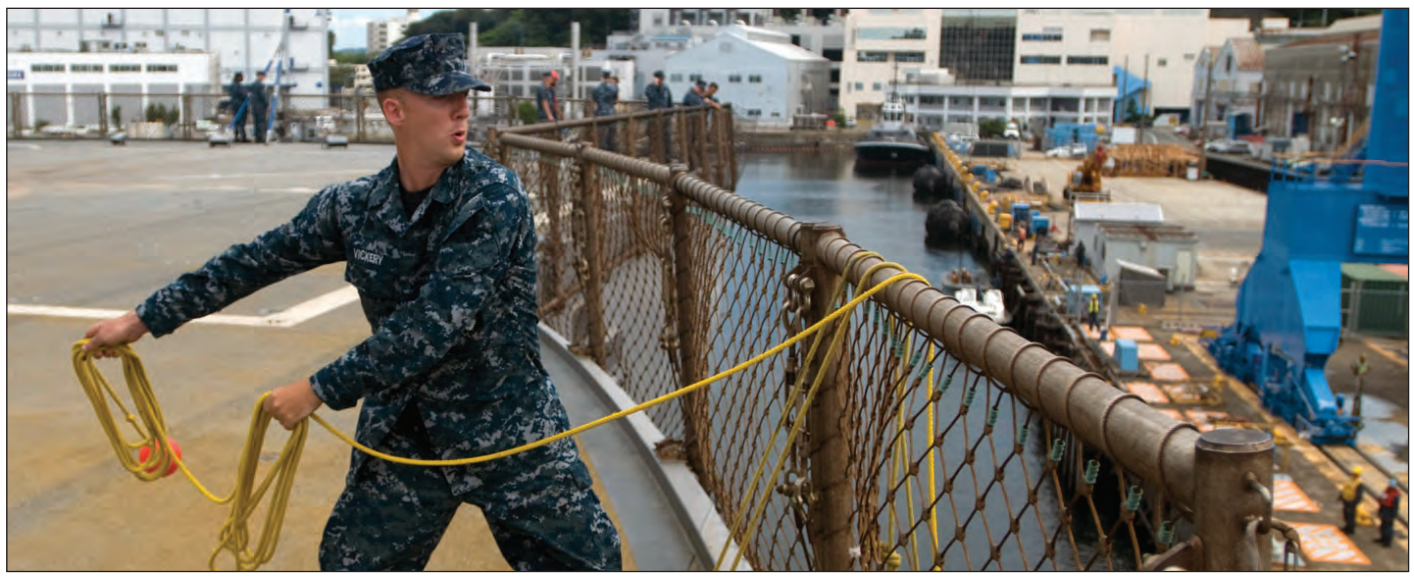
*See **VOICE** page 12*

Yokosuka City Hall employee instructs CFAY schoolbus drivers assigned to NAVFAC FE about the Yokosuka City Basic Disaster Plan during a training class Aug. 24. The plan layouts out procedures for the drivers in the event of an earthquake and tsunami.

U.S. Navy photo by MC2(SW/AW) John S. Smolinski

USS Blue Ridge returns to Yokosuka

By MC3 James Norman, *USS Blue Ridge* Public Affairs



SN Joshua Vickery throws a heaving line to the pier from the main deck aboard U.S. 7th Fleet flagship USS Blue Ridge (LCC 19) as the ship arrives in Yokosuka, Japan.

U.S. Navy photo by MCSA Ben Larscheid

U.S. 7th Fleet flagship *USS Blue Ridge* (LCC 19) returned to Yokosuka, Japan Sept. 4 after visiting ports in Japan and Republic of Korea (ROK) and concluding its participation in Ulchi Freedom Guardian 2012 (UFG12).

As a part of UFG12, *Blue Ridge* visited Hakata, Japan as well as Busan, Pyeongtaek, and Chinhae, South Korea demonstrating the alliance between ROK and U.S. navies, enhancing combat readiness of the two nations, and demonstrating a combined interoperability.

In each port, Sailors provided several tours to distinguished visitors, such as U.S. Army Col. Don Degido, Commander, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Far East District. Korean sailors, including Admiral Yoon Hee Choi, Republic of Korea's Chief of Naval Operations, also took tours aboard *Blue Ridge* as a part of a cultural exchange.

In all of the ports, Sailors volunteered at local children's centers to take on small renovation projects and had the chance to interact with the children by playing games and other activities.

"I sign up for community service projects to share my time with those who are less fortunate than myself," Ship's Serviceman 2nd Class Quinton Lewis said. "I rearranged a children's library and had the opportunity to sing a young boy to sleep in my arms. It was a rewarding and heart-warming experience for me."

Blue Ridge has been forward deployed to Yokosuka, Japan, for nearly 33 years. As the flagship for Commander, U.S. 7th Fleet, *Blue Ridge* is instrumental in forging partnerships in the region while leading the fleet with its advanced shipboard communications systems.

INSIDE

George Washington honors POW/MIA's

Forward-deployed aircraft carrier *USS George Washington* (CVN 73) held a ceremony Aug. 30 honoring prisoners of war (POW) and missing in action (MIA) service members.

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FAST team builds resilience for Suicide Prevention Month

The excitement of life, especially living overseas, can be enriching and rewarding, but also carries its own unique challenges and stressors.

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